

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: SHERIFF & COMMUNICATIONS

DATE: JULY 27, 2006

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Supervisors Bentley
VanNess
O'Connor
Belden
Mason
Haskell
Stec

OTHERS PRESENT:

Sheriff Cleveland
Chairman Thomas
Joan Parsons, Commissioner of Administrative
& Fiscal Services
Joan Sady, Clerk
Supervisor Barody
Supervisor Caimano
Supervisor Kenny
Maury Thompson, The Post Star
Amanda Allen, Legislative Office Specialist

Mr. Bentley called the meeting of the Sheriff and Communications Committee to order at 9:36 a.m.

Motion was made by Mr. Mason, seconded by Mr. Belden and carried unanimously to approve the minutes of the June 27, 2006 meeting subject to correction by the Clerk.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Sheriff Larry Cleveland, who distributed copies of his agenda to the Committee members.

Sheriff Cleveland began by addressing item number one of his agenda which referenced a request made by Robert Phelps, Commissioner of the Department of Social Services, to have an investigator work in his department on a full-time basis. Sheriff Cleveland said that although he wanted the Committee to be aware of the action, this item would be placed on the pending items list for discussion at a future meeting as the County Attorney was researching the legality of the request.

Sheriff Cleveland apprised that the Department of Social Services had funds within their budget to cover the cost of hiring an investigator to work on both child protective and fraud cases. Sheriff Cleveland stated that currently, Mr. Phelps and his staff were unable to research those cases as thoroughly as an investigator would as they did not have access to the same information. An investigator could access police databases for information such as license plate numbers, prior criminal records, home and business addresses and such, Sheriff Cleveland noted. He added that it was his understanding the salary for the position would be 100% reimbursable by New York State so long as the investigator was working in the Social Services division.

Mr. VanNess asked if this would take an investigator away from the Sheriff's Department to which Sheriff Cleveland replied that it would not. He added that if the request were

approved, he would ask the Committee to create a new position for a Social Services Investigator and his division would not be affected.

Mr. O'Connor noted that the issue would most likely be addressed in the Social Services Committee meeting scheduled for the following day and asked Sheriff Cleveland what justification was used to facilitate the need for an investigator. Sheriff Cleveland said that he was not given the justification for the creation of the position, but he assumed that Mr. Phelps would disclose the need for the addition during his Committee meeting.

Mr. VanNess said although he was initially hesitant, as he thought the investigator would be removed from the Sheriff's Department, he was in favor of the request. He added that the Department of Social Services would be aided greatly by an employee with access to police records and databases.

Sheriff Cleveland informed the Committee of the pending child welfare legislation which, if passed, would require a police escort for any child involved in an abuse case from the time it was reported until the day the court made a final decision on the case. He noted that the Sheriff's Department would be hampered by the new law if passed.

Mr. Stec entered the meeting at 9:39 a.m.

Sheriff Cleveland proceeded to item number two of his agenda which pertained to traffic direction and control for events and parades. He said that the Sheriff's Department was continually experiencing trouble with the closing of roads and traffic control. Sheriff Cleveland advised that a resolution request was being prepared to allow the Sheriff's Department to contact Warren County DPW (Department of Public Works) and instruct them to place barricades or traffic direction where needed rather than requesting approval from the Board of Supervisors for each event.

A perfect example of the need for the resolution, Sheriff Cleveland noted, was the NYS Fire Chiefs' Association Convention held in Lake George earlier this year. He said that certain roads needed to be closed for the event and although the Sheriff's Department had the authority to close the roads, they did not have the supplies to erect the barricades. Mr. Remington, DPW Superintendent, had been contacted to facilitate these needs however he required Board approval to comply, Sheriff Cleveland said, making a simple process much more lengthy and difficult. The resolution would help to alleviate these problems, he added.

Joan Parsons entered the meeting at 9:43 a.m.

Mr. Belden noted that the issue had been discussed in a prior DPW Committee meeting. Joan Sady, Clerk, added that the Committee had approved the request and a resolution was being prepared for the August Board meeting. Sheriff Cleveland apprised that the final item listed on his agenda was a notice of intent

to fill a vacant position. He said that the position was a full-time Corrections Officer and had been vacated due to resignation.

Mr. Belden asked Sheriff Cleveland when the position had been vacated and for what reason. Sheriff Cleveland responded that the position was actually the same one that had been addressed with a Notice of Intent to Fill Vacant Position request during the prior months meeting. He said that after the person had resigned last month, he requested that he be allowed to come back to work and then resigned again two weeks later. Sheriff Cleveland noted that the concession to rehire that person was made on behalf of the other employees of the department, but would not happen again.

Motion was made by Mr. Haskell, seconded by Mr. VanNess and carried unanimously to approve the request as outlined above and refer same to the Personnel Committee.

Sheriff Cleveland stated that he had met with the Budget Officer to discuss the possible increase in patrol officer positions and the possibility of extending the recruitment beyond next year as originally planned. He noted that a plan had not been finalized for this action, but he would return with the pertinent information and budget details at the next Committee meeting.

General discussion ensued between Committee members with reference to a newspaper article printed in The Post Star recently which detailed the proposed employment of several patrol officers and the substantial fringe benefits they would receive. Sheriff Cleveland noted that it was his hope that no one believed that any employee was receiving 73% in fringe benefits. The Committee members agreed that there must have been a mis-communication with the writer of the article. Sheriff Cleveland clarified that the fringe benefit amount was approximately 30%.

Mr. VanNess thanked Sheriff Cleveland for his assistance recently at a fund raising event held for a young boy who was injured on Sacandaga Lake earlier in the summer. He said that traffic assistance was required at the last minute and Sheriff Cleveland responded promptly dispatching an officer to the scene of the event. Sheriff Cleveland replied that he was happy to help and noted that the fund raiser was organized by a group of youths who did a great job. Mr. VanNess added that \$1500 was raised during the event.

Mr. Belden stated that he wished to thank Sheriff Cleveland for the patrol of the Dock Road in the Town of Hague. Sheriff Cleveland informed the Committee that recently Mr. Belden had complained about violators of the scheduled hours of use for the docks. Sheriff Cleveland said that he had placed a patrol vehicle at the scene to enforce the schedule and in the process had made a DWI arrest.

Mr. Stec asked Sheriff Cleveland if there was any update on the DPW radio situation. Sheriff Cleveland replied that although this was a DPW issue, the Sheriff's Office had assisted to re-program existing radios and all were now in working order.

Sheriff Cleveland apprised the Committee that there were speed signs placed in various locations throughout Warren County. Mr. Stec noted that the sign placed on West Mountain Road in the Town of Queensbury was being used to record the speed of passing vehicles for submission to New York State with a request to lower the speed limit in that area. Sheriff Cleveland said that generally these signs were in place for seven to ten days and then were replaced with a patrol vehicle to enforce the speed limits. General discussion ensued between Committee members with respect to this issue.

As there was no further business to come before the Sheriff and Communications Committee, on motion made by Mr. VanNess and seconded by Mr. Belden, Mr. Bentley adjourned the meeting at 9:57 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Amanda Allen, Legislative Office Specialist